

## Feelings by ncc2011

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**Summary:** One-shot of Mike's POV during his moment with Eleven in the school cafeteria.

## Feelings

Lucas and Dustin had just found the chocolate pudding, though I wished Dustin hadn't just screamed that from the other room and just brought it. I explained this chocolatey new food to El after she asked what it was. At least she could eat something besides those damn Eggos. But I also wanted her to know this charade of being scavengers for her would end as soon as the Bad People went away and Will was back safe and sound.

"Don't worry," I told her. "When all this is over, you won't have to keep eating junk food and leftovers like a dog anymore."

I wanted so badly for her to stay with us. Stay with me. My parents didn't even know she existed, but I was sure they would let her once they knew everything. Regardless, I didn't want her to just leave.

"My mom, she's a pretty awesome cook," I continued. "She can make you whatever you like."

"Eggos?" asked El.

The Eggos again, I thought. Isn't there anything else she desires? Then, I remembered she probably ate some things so grueling at the lab, she couldn't always tell good taste from bad. I had as much to learn from her as she did from me.

"Well yeah, Eggos, but real food too," I sighed.

With no one else in the cafeteria, there was no better time to tell her what I felt she should do. I would just be friendly when discussing it. But I wasn't ready to confess my feelings for her. Not yet anyway.

"See, I was thinking," I began. "Once all this is over and Will's back and you're not a secret anymore, my parents can get you an actual bed for the basement. Or you can take my room if you want, since I'm down there all the time anyways."

I wasn't quite sure I was getting through to her. She needed to understand. She could have a family. A real one.

"My point is, they'll take care of you," I went on. "They'll be like your new parents, and Nancy, she'll be like your new sister."

"Will you be like my brother?" El asked.

Uh oh. That wasn't what I was hoping to hear. It was like she was trying to pry open my mind with the incredibly strong one she had, even if she didn't realize it. Still not quite ready to tell her everything, I got defensive.

"What?" I replied in bewilderment. "No, no."

"Why 'no'?" she wondered.

"Because," I said, struggling to find the right words. "Cause it's different."

"Why?"

"I mean, I don't know, I guess it's not," I lied. "It's stupid."

"Mike?"

"Yeah?"

"Friends don't lie."

Now I knew there was no avoiding it. I had taught her that phrase to help her understand what friendship meant and suddenly, I wished I hadn't. But sooner or later, all secrets get out and this one had just selected its moment. If I was going to do this though, I would have to be subtle, as nervous as I was.

"Well, I was thinking, I don't know, maybe we can go to the Snow Ball together," I said.

"Snow Ball?"

"It's this cheesy school dance, where you go in the gym and dance to music and stuff. I've never been, but I know you're not supposed to go with your sister."

"No?"

"I mean you can, but it'd be really weird."

For a split second, I thought about the poor saps that had actually gone to dances with their sisters. I didn't know any personally, but there had to have been a few out there. Still, that inward attempt at cutting the tension didn't do any good. My heart was pounding faster and faster.

"You go to school dances with someone that," I paused. "You know, someone that you like."

"A friend?" asked El.

"Not a friend," I answered, butterflies and blood pressure increasing. "Uh, uh, uh, someone like a..."

I ran out of words. My feelings for her had reached a boiling point. She was just so beautiful, short hair and all. With nothing left to say, I did the only thing I could do: kiss her with all the affection that had been building inside of me for the past week.

All I could do after a couple seconds was stare at this wonderfully pretty face I had grown accustomed and attracted to. Neither of us was quite sure what to think. What I did know was I would never forget this moment. Everyone gets only one first kiss and I couldn't believe mine was with such a unique girl, one who was unlike any other in the world, which was what made her all the more special.

Just then, I saw car lights flashing outside. Jonathan and Nancy must have been back. It was time for me to excuse myself before I did anything to spoil the mood.

"Nancy," I told El. "Hold on, I'll be right back. Stay here."

With that, I left the cafeteria. As I headed toward the exit, I made a solemn pledge to myself that I wouldn't let anything happen to El. I was already doing everything I could to protect her, but that kiss was my way of saying I cared about her with all my heart, mind and soul. If any of the Bad People wanted to harm her, they would have to go through me and I wasn't going to give her up without a fight.